

LITURGICAL EXPRESSIONS OF THE CONSTANTINIAN TRIUMPH

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I

TAKEN in its broadest limits, the years 306–337, the reign of Constantine falls in the center of a century in the history of the Church for which we have scant information about the development of its worship. Between the first half of the third and the second half of the fourth centuries very few liturgical texts are extant, and none of them illuminates directly the effects of Constantine's political and military triumphs, coincident with his conversion to Christianity.¹ For the period under review we depend chiefly upon literary texts and surviving monuments relating to ecclesiastical buildings.² These tell us much about the new splendor that began to surround the worship of the Church in its external setting, but almost nothing about new ceremonials that might reflect the imperial favor for the Christian faith.³

¹ For the early third century the primary text is *The Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus. See the edition of B. Botte, *La Tradition Apostolique de Saint Hippolyte, Essai de reconstitution*, Liturgiewissenschaftliche Quellen und Forschungen, 39 (Münster i. W., 1963), and for the many problems of its origin and reconstruction, J. M. Hanssens, *La liturgie d'Hippolyte. Ses documents, son titulaire, ses origines et son caractère*, Orientalia Christiana Analecta, 155 (Rome, 1959). The texts of Hippolytus are illuminated by scattered references in the writings of Tertullian, Cyprian, and Origen, and the singular passage in the Syrian *Didascaia Apostolorum*, ed. R. H. Connolly (Oxford, 1929), pp. 119–124. See E. Dekkers, *Tertullianus en de Geschiedenis der Liturgie* (Brussel-Amsterdam, 1947); J. Daniélou, *Origen*, trans. W. Mitchell (New York, 1955), pp. 28–40; M. H. Shepherd, Jr., *The Paschal Liturgy and the Apocalypse*, Ecumenical Studies in Worship, 6 (London-Richmond, 1960), pp. 48–67.

From the middle of the fourth century the liturgical documents become increasingly numerous, beginning with the *Mystagogical Lectures* of Cyril of Jerusalem and the *Sacramentary* of Sarapion of Thmuis. See F. L. Cross, *St. Cyril of Jerusalem's Lectures on the Christian Sacraments*, Texts for Students, 51 (London, 1951); F. E. Brightman, "The Sacramentary of Serapion of Thmuis," *The Journal of Theological Studies*, 1 (1900), pp. 88–113, 247–277; texts with commentary also in J. Quasten, *Monumenta eucharistica et liturgica vetustissima*, Florilegium Patristicum (Bonn, 1935–37), pp. 48–111, and bibliography in *idem*, *Patrology*, 3 (Utrecht-Westminster, Md., 1960), pp. 82–84, 363–367. One should not overlook the canons of the various Councils of the fourth century.

For the reign of Constantine we possess: 1. The decisions of the Council of Nicaea (325) regarding the date of Easter: the Letter of the Council to the Church of Alexandria (Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, I. 9; Theodoret, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, I. 8), and the Letter of Constantine to the Churches (Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, III. 18–20; Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, I. 9; cf. Theodoret, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, I. 9). 2. The Calendar of the Roman Church (336) preserved in the *Chronography of 354*: see L. Duchesne, *Le Liber Pontificalis, Texte, introduction et commentaire*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1886–1955), I, pp. VI–VII, 10–11; H. Stern, *Le calendrier de 354. Etude sur son texte et sur les illustrations*, Bibliothèque archéologique et historique, 55 (Paris, 1953). 3. The Sermon of Eusebius of Caesarea at the dedication of the Cathedral of Tyre (before 320): Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, X. 4. I have attempted to show that this sermon reflects an early stage of the Liturgy of St. James of Jerusalem: M. H. Shepherd, Jr., "Eusebius and the Liturgy of Saint James," *Yearbook of Liturgical Studies*, 4 (1963), pp. 109–123. 4. Fragments of the Alexandrian Liturgy of St. Mark, published by M. Andrieu and P. Collomp, "Fragments sur papyrus de l'anaphore de saint Marc," *Revue des sciences religieuses*, 8 (1928), pp. 489–515; also edited with commentary in Quasten, *Monumenta eucharistica*, pp. 44–49.

² The principal texts are: Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, III. 29–43, 48–53, 58, IV. 58–60; *Orat. de Const. laud.*, 9; and the catalogue of Roman churches and their endowments in *Liber Pontificalis* (ed. Duchesne, I, pp. 170–187). For general surveys of the monuments, see J. B. Ward Perkins, "Constantine and the Origins of the Christian Basilica," *Papers of the British School at Rome*, 22 (1954), pp. 69–90; R. Krautheimer, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture*, The Pelican History of Art, Z 24 (Baltimore, 1965), pp. 1–44.

³ See *infra*, page 61.

It is possible to argue that the process of change, innovation, and enrichment would have taken place in any case, provided the Church lived in peace from persecution, without the special benefactions and interventions of a converted Emperor with his impressive religious ideology of political power and sovereignty. From our present perspective, the decade between Diocletian's first edict of February 303 and Constantine's reversal of it in February 313 appears to be a sudden and dramatic turning point not only in the history of Christianity but indeed in the history of western civilization. One need not, and one should not minimize its significance. Yet the historic revolution in the Church's fortunes was an historic evolution. Innovation built on tradition. The Church took up in 313 a life continuous with all that it had, including all that it had by force to abandon, in 303.

The Diocletian persecution was not a novel experience for the Church. A half-century earlier it had undergone a similar trial for a decade from Decius and Valerian. The toleration edict of Gallienus in 260 had been more generous, at least in economic reward, than that of Galerius in 311, if not so open-handed as that of Constantine and Licinius in 313. Moreover the persecutions of Decius and Valerian had affected the Church generally with equal severity in all parts of the Empire. The Diocletian persecution was endured with much greater intensity and suffering in the Eastern than it was in the Western provinces.⁴

The long generation of peace between the Valerian and the Diocletian persecutions is the most poorly documented of all periods of Church history. Yet it was a time of crucial preparation for the Church's experience with Constantine and his immediate successors. From this half-century no writings of a major theologian or exegete are extant.⁵ The record of the Church's growth in numbers, resources, and influence is confined largely to the generalities of Eusebius' history.⁶

One suspects but cannot prove that this period of expansion between Valerian and Diocletian is related in some way to the political, military, and economic crisis of the Empire. More especially, it is connected in a real but indefinable way with the emergence of Christianity as an intellectual and spiritual "third force" of monotheism, over against the increasing official favor of cultic monotheism in the worship of the Unconquered Sun-god on the one hand, and the monistic, mystical philosophy of Neoplatonism on the other. The Roman state religion had no apologist who could match the character of Tertullian and Cyprian among the Latin Fathers. And Plotinus and Porphyry had their match in Origen and Dionysius of Alexandria among the Greek Fathers.

⁴ G. E. M. de Ste. Croix, "Aspects of the 'Great' Persecution," *The Harvard Theological Review*, 47 (1954), pp. 75-113.

⁵ Of Origen's great pupil, Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria (248-265), we possess only fragments of his writings, and almost nothing of his successors Theognostos and Pierius. The same is true of Lucian, founder of the Antiochene school. The extant works of Methodius of Olympus and Arnobius of Sicca hardly deserve rank in the catalogue of foremost Fathers of the Church.

⁶ *Historia Ecclesiastica*, VII. 26-VIII. 1. See *infra*, note 27.

During the forty-year period of peace in the late third century Christianity became the dominant religion in North Africa and in parts of Asia Minor, and it made considerable gains in Syria and Egypt.⁷ Institutionally, the Church developed a viable structure of episcopal synods within provincial boundaries to deal with theological and disciplinary issues, as early as the late second century. But the councils held in connection with the heresy of Bishop Paul at Antioch, between 264 and 268, established new precedents, both in their inter-provincial character and in their final appeal to the State (specifically, to the Emperor Aurelian) to enforce ecclesiastical decisions.⁸ Thus the councils called by Constantine, in their composition, procedures, and canonical decisions, were all based on precedents of the third century. What was new about them were the personal interest and involvement of the Emperor himself, the financing of them by the State, and the wider geographical representation of their participants.

One may note the same continuity in the development and adornment of the Church's worship. The basic patterns of the liturgy in structure and outline, in ritual theme and ceremonial accompaniment—whether for the Sunday, the Paschal, or the martyr-anniversary celebrations—were established by the early third century, as is evident from the writings of Hippolytus, Tertullian, and Origen.⁹ These patterns derive in most of their substance and detail from Christian transformation of a Jewish liturgical inheritance. But well before the third century Christian apologists could see analogous themes and practices in the rites of mystery-cults in the pagan Graeco-Roman world.¹⁰ Archaeological evidence makes it clear that the Christian observances in connection with the commemoration of the departed were modelled in form, though not basically in conception, upon contemporary non-Christian religious custom.¹¹

It is erroneous to suppose that Christian worship, under the protection and promotion of Constantine, suddenly changed its character from a simple, spontaneous, and unstructured spirituality to one of complex formalism and elaborate ceremonialism. Indeed we have no evidence for any ceremonial innovations in the liturgy during the reign of Constantine himself. Elaborations appear not to have begun before the middle of the fourth century. Stational processions on the great holy days to the sacred places were organized in Jerusalem during the episcopate of Cyril (348–386) for the edification of the

⁷ The basic study is A. Harnack, *The Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries*, trans. James Moffatt, 2 vols. (New York, 1904–1905), 2, pp. 240–451. The evidence for North Africa is developed in detail in W. H. C. Frend, *The Donatist Church, A Movement of Protest in Roman North Africa* (Oxford, 1952), pp. 76–111.

⁸ Eusebius, *H. E.*, VII. 27–30.

⁹ See *supra*, note 1.

¹⁰ Justin Martyr, *Apol.*, I. 66; *Dial.* 70; Tertullian, *De praescr. haer.* 40—both of whom relate the sacraments to the Mithra mysteries. On the whole subject, see H. Rahner, "The Christian Mystery and the Pagan Mysteries," *The Mysteries, Papers from the Eranos Yearbooks*, Bollingen Series, XXX-2 (New York, 1955), pp. 337–369.

¹¹ A. Parrot, *Le "Refrigerium" dans l'au-delà* (Paris, 1937); A. C. Rush, *Death and Burial in Christian Antiquity*, Studies in Christian Antiquity, 1 (Washington, 1941); A. Stuiber, *Refrigerium interim, Die Vorstellungen von Zwischenzustand und die frühchristliche Grabskunst*, Theophaneia, 11 (Bonn, 1957); and the review of this last work by L. De Bruyne, "Refrigerium interim," *Rivista di Archeologia Cristiana*, 34 (1958), pp. 87–118.

increasing numbers of pilgrims no less than of the local church. Constantine's and his mother's interest in the aggrandizement of these "holy places" no doubt greatly stimulated the custom of pilgrimage, but it did not initiate the practice, since it is attested as early as the beginning of the third century.¹² The communal psalmody of monastic choirs, in antiphonal structure, was first introduced to the public assemblies of worship in Antioch by Diodore and Flavian, during the episcopate of the semi-Arian Leontius (344–357).¹³ It was a notable feature of the daily worship of the church in Jerusalem towards the end of the fourth century, according to the descriptions of the pilgrim nun Etheria.¹⁴ Ambrose introduced it to the West at Milan in 386, at a dramatic time of crisis between the Bishop and the imperial court.¹⁵ The custom was not introduced at Rome until the fifth century.¹⁶

The adoption by the churches of ceremonial customs associated with the imperial court cannot be attested before the reign of Theodosius I. The honor accorded by Constantine to the bishops, and notably his privilege granted to them to hear cases at law, naturally gave them a high social status in the class structure of the Empire.¹⁷ But the use of *insignia* of rank does not appear to have been associated with liturgical functions before at least the fifth century.¹⁸ The early fifth-century mosaic portrait of Ambrose preserved in the chapel of San Vittore in Milan shows him in the ordinary dress of an aristocrat of his time, with the singular ecclesiastical mark of a brooch in the form of a cross that holds together his *paenula* over the dalmatic and tunicle.¹⁹ The ceremonial use of incense, as distinguished from its utilitarian purpose of perfume, is commonly ascribed to Ambrose, but the evidence is disputable.²⁰ In Chris-

¹² W. Telfer, ed., *Cyril of Jerusalem and Nemesius of Emesa*, The Library of Christian Classics, 4 (Philadelphia, 1955), pp. 54–63.

¹³ Theodoret, *H. E.*, II. 19 (cf. Socrates, *H. E.*, VI. 8). Basil, *Ep.* 207, says that the custom was in vogue in all the churches (written ca. 375).

¹⁴ *Journal de Voyage*, ed. Hélène Pétré, Sources Chrétiennes, 21 (Paris, 1948).

¹⁵ Paulinus, *Vita Ambrosii*, 13; Augustine, *Conf.* IX. 7; Isidore, *De eccl. off.*, I. 7.

¹⁶ Pope Celestine I (422–432) introduced the use of the Psalms at the liturgy (*Liber Pontificalis*, ed. Duchesne, 1, p. 230). Pope Leo I established the first monastery, next to St. Peter's, for the performance of the Office in the basilica (*ibid.*, 239); cf. G. Ferrari, *Early Roman Monasteries*, Studi di antichità cristiana, 23 (Città del Vaticano, 1957), pp. 166–172.

¹⁷ *Cod. Theod.*, I. 27. 1; *Const. Sirm.*, 1; cf. *Cod. Theod.*, XVI. 5. 52.

¹⁸ A. Alföldi, "Insignien und Tracht der römischen Kaiser," *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archaeologischen Instituts, Röm. Abt.*, 50 (1935), pp. 1–171; J. Braun, *Die liturgische Gewandung im Occident und Orient nach Ursprung und Entwicklung, Verwendung und Symbolik* (Freiburg i. B., 1907); Th. Klauser, *Der Ursprung des bischöflichen Insignien und Ehrenrechte* (Krefeld, 1948); P. Salmon, *Etude sur les insignes du pontife dans le rit romain, Histoire et liturgie* (Rome, 1955).

¹⁹ W. F. Volbach, *Early Christian Art*, Photography by Max Hirmer (New York, 1962), pl. 132, p. 337. Cf. *Cod. Theod.*, XIV. 10. 1, dated 382, on the dress of the senatorial class.

²⁰ Ambrose, *Expos. in Lucam*, I. 28. Compare the negative interpretation of E. G. C. F. Atchley, *A History of the Use of Incense in Divine Worship*, Alcuin Club Collections, 13 (London, 1909), pp. 94–96, with the more positive explanation of E. Fehrenbach, s.v. "Encens," *Dict. d'Arch. Chrét. et de Liturgie*, 5, cols. 11–12. Constantine's gifts to the churches in Rome included "censors" (*tymiamaterium*), but these were undoubtedly for purposes of perfume, and had no liturgical significance (*Liber Pontificalis*, ed. Duchesne, 1, p. 174 ff.). Etheria mentions the *thymiataria* brought in to the Anastasis of Jerusalem at the end of Sunday vigils, when the Bishop read the gospel of the Resurrection, but she speaks of them only as "filling the basilica with perfumes." (*Itinerarium*, 24. 10; see *supra*, note 14.) The varying interpretations on the introduction of incense in the liturgy may also be noted in Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (Westminster, 1945), pp. 425–430; and J. A. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development*, 2 vols. (New York, 1951–1955), 1, pp. 317–320.

tian burial rites, it is first attested in connection with the funeral of the martyred Bishop Peter of Alexandria in 311.²¹

The inventory of Constantine's churches in Rome, extant in the *Liber Pontificalis*, records a dazzling endowment of precious ornament, furniture and plate.²² No doubt, this is evidence of his concern for the worldly splendor of his imperial religious foundations. Eusebius' successor in the see of Caesarea, Bishop Acacius, referred to a "holy robe, fashioned with golden threads" which Constantine gave to Bishop Macarius of Jerusalem for use in the rite of baptism.²³ This is a singular reference to liturgical vestments at so early a time;²⁴ it may be only a peculiar concern of Constantine for the ornament of his favored foundation at the Anastasis. Eusebius recounts the Emperor's order of handsomely transcribed and bound parchment manuscripts of the Holy Scriptures, prepared by professional calligraphers and artists, for distribution among the churches.²⁵ Much of these benefactions were reparation for losses incurred during the persecution, whether by forced seizure of the police or voluntary *traditio* of apostatizing clergy. Yet many churches before the persecution could boast of prized possessions of manuscripts and plate. We possess an inventory of property seized by the police in May 303, with only a token resistance from the clergy, from the church in Cirta (today, Constantine) in North Africa. Dom Gregory Dix remarked that it "had a collection of church plate which few parish churches in England at the present day could rival," and that, too, in "a small church in an unimportant provincial town."²⁶

Whatever the simplicities of Christian liturgy were in the pre-Constantinian era, they depended in large measure upon local circumstances: e.g., the size and affluence of the particular church; the intellectual and aesthetic talents and tastes of the leaders and people; the physical restrictions imposed by small house-church or cemetery-chapel arrangements; the relative freedom from fear of police surveillance or persecution. One is always suspicious of the rhetoric of Eusebius. Yet his exordium to the eighth book of his History, in which he describes the growing influence and affluence of the churches in the late third century, can be documented from many instances other than those he mentions. He says:

It is beyond our powers to describe in a worthy manner the measure and nature of that honour as well as freedom which was accorded by all men,

²¹ *Acta* (Migne, PG, 18, col. 465), but these date from the seventh century. Cf. Fehrenbach, *op. cit.*, col. 9; Atchley, *op. cit.*, p. 97 ff.

²² See *supra*, note 2.

²³ Theodoret, *H. E.*, II. 23. Acacius accused Cyril of having sold it. According to Sozomen, *H. E.*, IV. 25, Cyril sold church ornaments to relieve a famine. This reminds one of a similar charge against Ambrose (*De off.*, II. 28) for using church plate to redeem captives of the barbarians. These examples show the attitude of fourth-century bishops regarding the "sacral" character of church ornaments.

²⁴ The *Apost. Const.*, VIII. 12 (ca. 380), refers to the bishop putting on a "splendid vestment" for the liturgy. The garment is obviously not one associated with ordinary dress, but its shape and character are difficult to describe.

²⁵ *V.C.*, IV. 34-37.

²⁶ Dix, *op. cit.*, p. 26. See *Gesta apud Zenophilum* (ed. C. Ziwsa, Corpus Script. Ecc. Lat., 26 [Vienna, 1893]), pp. 186-188.

both Greeks and barbarians, before the persecution in our day, to that word of piety toward the God of the universe which had been proclaimed through Christ to the world.

Yet proofs might be forthcoming in the favours granted by the rulers to our people; to whom they would even entrust the government of the provinces Why need one speak of those in the imperial palaces and of the supreme rulers, who allowed the members of their households—wives, children and servants—to practise openly to their face the divine word and conduct, and—one might say—permitted them even to boast of the freedom accorded to the faith?

And how could one fully describe those assemblies thronged with countless men, and the multitudes that gathered together in every city, and the famed concourses in the places of prayer; by reason of which they were no longer satisfied with the buildings of olden time, and would erect from the foundations churches of spacious dimensions throughout all the cities?²⁷

II

Given favorable conditions of peace and recognition, the Church was always able to make its mark against religious competitors. An early example is furnished by the buffer Kingdom of Osrhoene in the late second century whose King Abgar IX of Edessa seems to have shown a special interest in Christianity. From this center stems the oldest collection of Christian hymns, the *Odes of Solomon*, and what is perhaps the oldest liturgy of the Eastern Churches still in use, among the Nestorians, the Liturgy of Addai and Mari.²⁸ The *Chronicle of Edessa* (composed ca. 540) records the destruction of a “temple of the Christians” in a flood of the year 201, as though it were a significant building.²⁹ In the same period, the Church of Edessa was adorned by Bardaisan, a philosopher-theologian of eminence and a friend of King Abgar.³⁰

If we had comparable sources, much the same story might be related of the impact of Christianity in Armenia, in the late third century, by the work of St. Gregory the Illuminator, and the conversion of King Tiridates. Harnack was bold enough to say that “when Constantine recognized and granted privileges to Christianity he was only following in the footsteps of the Armenian king.”³¹

Eusebius has recorded a story of the Emperor Philip the Arabian (244–249), whose sympathy with or curiosity about Christianity induced him to apply to

²⁷ Eusebius, *H. E.*, VIII. 1 (trans. H. J. Lawlor and J. E. L. Oulton [London, 1954], 1, p. 255).

²⁸ E. C. Ratcliff, “The Original Form of the Anaphora of Addai and Mari: A Suggestion,” *The Journal of Theological Studies*, 30 (1928), pp. 23–32; B. Botte, “L’Anaphore Chaldéenne des Apôtres,” *Orientalia christiana periodica*, 15 (1949), pp. 259–276. For the *Odes of Solomon*, see Quasten, *Patrology*, 1 (Utrecht-Westminster, Md., 1950), pp. 160–168.

²⁹ The *Chronicum Edessenum* is in *Chronica minora*, Corpus Script. Christ. Orient., 3rd Ser., vol. 4 (Paris-Leipzig, 1903). Cf. F. C. Burkitt in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, 12 (1939), p. 496; and R. Janin in *Dict. d’Hist. et de Géogr. Ecclés.*, 14, col., 1422.

³⁰ Quasten, *Patrology*, 1, pp. 263–264; H. J. W. Drijvers, *Bardaisan of Edessa*, *Studia Semitica Neerlandica*, 6 (Assen, 1966).

³¹ Harnack, *op. cit. (supra, note 7)*, 2, p. 345.

Bishop Babylas of Antioch for admission to "the paschal vigil to share along with the multitude the prayers at the church, but was not permitted to enter . . . [unless] he confessed and numbered himself among those who were reckoned to be in sins and were occupying the place of penitence."³² According to Eusebius, Philip's leanings toward Christianity were in some measure a motive for Decius' persecution, in which, it may be noted, Bishop Babylas was one of the first victims.³³ Whatever may have been the religious aberrations of Philip the Arabian, the story of Eusebius suggests that the church in Antioch was not hidden in a corner.

Indeed, in the 260's, the Church of Antioch had a bishop in the person of Paul of Samosata, who was a *procurator ducenarius* of Queen Zenobia during the period when the Palmyrene kingdom controlled Syria.³⁴ Paul's personality and character have been distorted by the *odium theologicum* of his episcopal opponents. He was a man of humble origin without inherited resources, who by his wits and sense of opportunity had amassed a fortune in the practice of law and in investment business. He had acquired a good education, sophisticated tastes, and special gifts of eloquence. His intellectual polish was such that the bishops who sought to condemn him as a heretic had to employ a distinguished dialectician and rhetorician of Antioch, albeit a Christian priest, named Malchion. There is no evidence to support the conjecture that Paul's election as Bishop of Antioch, ca. 260, was due to special influence of the Dux Odenathus of Palmyra.³⁵ He did become a protégé of Zenobia, who was able to protect him in both his political and his ecclesiastical offices until her overthrow by Aurelian in 272.

One of the charges against Paul was innovation in the liturgy. He introduced trained choirs to supplant some of the popular hymnody of the people. He placed these choirs in the middle of the church where he set up his *bema* and lofty throne. This arrangement is probably the origin of the custom known from later Syrian churches of a platform and episcopal chair in the midst of the nave, for the conduct of the first half of the liturgy, until the celebrant moved to the altar at the east end or sanctuary at the time of the Offertory.³⁶ Paul also encouraged the bishops and priests of his province to imitate his more elegant and rhetorical style of preaching. All these innovations indicate the beginnings of a more elaborate and aesthetically pleasing worship—at least in Antioch and Syria—that is prophetic of fourth-century developments.

Paul of Samosata was a "self-made" man. He was possibly the first politician to become a bishop of the Church. But he was certainly not the first successful man of business to occupy an episcopal throne. One recalls Cyprian's complaint,

³² *H. E.*, VI. 34.

³³ *Ibid.*, VI. 39.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, VII. 30, 8. For the title, see E. Stommel, "Bischofsstuhl und hoher Thron," *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*, 1 (1958), pp. 55–56. Cf. *infra*, note 37.

³⁵ G. Bardy, *Paul de Samosate, Etude historique*, Spicilegium sacrum Lovaniense, Etudes et documents, fasc. 4 (Louvain, 1929), p. 257ff.

³⁶ See the references in our paper, "The Formation and Influence of the Antiochene Liturgy," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 15 (1961), p. 36, note 60.

not without exaggeration and generalization, that before the Decian persecution, "many bishops who should have provided exhortation and example to others had despised their divine charge to become agents of secular kings (*procuratores regum saecularium*), and having forsaken their throne (*cathedra*) and abandoning their people, wandered about through foreign provinces, searching the markets for gainful merchandise. While brothers in the church were starving, they wished to have money in abundance, to seize estates by crafty deals, and augment their gains by multiplying usury."³⁷

Cyprian himself was a man of considerable wealth and status in society before his conversion. His disdain of money-making bishops possibly represents the prejudice of the affluent Roman upper-class against business. His social status is evident from the authentic, eye-witness report of his martyrdom in 258. He was respectfully arrested by important officials, and detained not in a common prison, but in a villa used by the proconsul, and executed by beheading. Just before his fateful end, he charged his friends to give twenty-five gold pieces to the executioner. His corpse was carried in public procession by the faithful, with torches and tapers, for burial in the *area* of no less than the proconsul himself.³⁸

We know little about Cyprian's liturgical concerns over and beyond the customs already familiar in the North African church. A recent study has pointed out that his sacramental theology, specifically in respect to priesthood and sacrifice, marked novel directions that were probably influenced by "a carry-over of ideas from Cyprian's pre-Christian past."³⁹ We know that Cyprian was elected a bishop within a very few years of his conversion, and that this election was resented by many who felt that he was too much of a neophyte to assume this office. The extraordinary difficulties of his episcopate were no doubt due in the main to the persecutions of Decius and Valerian, which overwhelmed him so shortly after his elevation to the episcopate. But they were also exasperated by the undercurrent of opposition and jealousy with respect to his swift and unprecedented rise to episcopal office.⁴⁰

The careers of bishops such as Paul in Antioch and Cyprian in Carthage underscore our assertion that Constantine's favor of Christianity was not a revolution, but an evolution. Given conditions of peace if not friendship from the temporal power, the Church in the third century was producing bishops—men of education, culture, and civic status—whose guidance in organization, worship, and civic relations, anticipated the directions taken by the episcopate in the post-Constantinian period. The State could not in turn have ignored the growing numbers and influence of Christians, and would have intervened more and more in the internal affairs of the Church, as Aurelian did in enforcing the deposition of Paul of Samosata.

³⁷ *De lapsis*, 6. (Note the reference to a *procurator ducenarius* in Cyprian, *Ep.*, LXVII. 6.)

³⁸ *Acta proconsularia*, 5 (ed. G. Hartel, CSEL, 3, pt. 3, p. CXIII.).

³⁹ M. F. Wiles, "The Theological Legacy of St. Cyprian," *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 14 (1963), p. 149.

⁴⁰ Frend, *op. cit.*, pp. 125–140; and the older work of E. W. Benson, *Cyprian, His Life, His Times, His Work* (London, 1897), p. 25ff.

Even the Church in Rome, though a small minority within the predominantly pagan city, could not escape the notice and attention of the imperial administration. Aurelian judged the question of Bishop Paul on the basis of a decision requested by him from the Bishop of Rome.⁴¹ Pope Marcellinus, of "unhappy memory," met his fate in circumstances connected with the presence of Diocletian in the capital for his vicennalia in the fall of 303.⁴² Maxentius could not ignore the civic importance of internal disputes in the Roman Church over discipline that followed after the persecution, despite his personal disposition to leave it in peace. He banished both of the successors of Marcellinus, Popes Marcellus and Eusebius, because they could not maintain unity and concord in the Roman Christian community.⁴³

The conflict between Maxentius and Constantine was political, not religious. Otherwise it is difficult to understand how Mensurius of Carthage managed to win his suit before Maxentius on a charge of treason, or why Pope Miltiades, elected and enthroned in July 311 after the toleration edict of Galerius, could remain undisturbed and survive the crucial conflict resolved at Ponte Milvio the following year.⁴⁴

III

We possess no significant encomium of Constantine from Christian spokesmen following the victory over Maxentius, or after the conference and settlement with Licinius in Milan. Only two examples can be safely dated between 313 and 321, during the precarious alliance maintained between Constantine and Licinius. One is the exordium and peroration of Lactantius' *De mortibus persecutorum*; the other is the peroration of Eusebius' sermon at the dedication of the new cathedral at Tyre. Professor Jacques Moreau has pointed out the close similarity of the two passages, both in content and tone.⁴⁵ Both passages ignore Constantine specifically and dwell on the marvelous mercies of God in overthrowing the enemies of the Church and bringing it peace. Both summon the faithful to continual prayer for the pity of God in preserving His people in abiding peace and safety—very much in the vein of the liturgical prayers for Church and State that can be traced all the way back to *I Clement* at the end of the first century.⁴⁶

⁴¹ Eusebius, *H. E.*, VII. 30, 19.

⁴² The dates of the Roman pontiffs during this period are very confused. Most scholars place Marcellinus' death in 304. We follow the reconstruction of Hans von Schoenebeck, *Beiträge zur Religionspolitik des Maxentius und Constantin = Klio*, Beiheft 43, N.F., 30 (Leipzig, 1939). The Donatists made much of Marcellinus' supposed lapse; cf. Augustine, *Contra litt. Pet.*, II. 92–207. See the discussion of Duchesne in his edition of the *Liber Pontificalis*, I, pp. LXXIII–IV, 162–63; E. Caspar, *Geschichte des Papsttums von den Anfängen bis zur Höhe der Weltherrschaft*, 2 vols. (Tübingen, 1930), I, pp. 99–100.

⁴³ The principal evidence is contained in the two epitaphs of Damasus; cf. A. Ferrua, *Epigrammata Damasiana*, Sussidi allo studio delle antichità cristiane, 2 (Vatican City, 1942), nos. 18 and 40. In addition to von Schoenebeck, *op. cit.*, see also E. Schwartz, "Zur Geschichte des Athanasius IV," *Nachrichten von der Königl. Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Phil.-hist. Kl.* (1904), pp. 530–532.

⁴⁴ For Mensurius, see Optatus, I. 17 (CSEL, 26, p. 19). Miltiades was enthroned July 2, 311, and died Jan. 11, 314. He presided at the council held in connection with the Donatists at the Lateran in October 313: Optatus, I. 23 (CSEL, 26, pp. 26–27).

⁴⁵ J. Moreau, *Lactance, De la mort des persécuteurs*, 2 vols., Sources Chrétiennes, 39 (Paris, 1954), 2, p. 473.

⁴⁶ *I Clement*, 59–61. Cf. I Tim. 2:1–2.

The reticence of Lactantius and Eusebius at this time, so far as Constantine is concerned, is not an indication of uncertainty about Constantine's conversion to Christ. It is rather a realistic recognition of the ambivalence of the situation. The Church had seen persecutions come and go. The Empire was still divided. If the western ruler was indicating an increasing interest in Christianity and attachment to its God as author of his success, the eastern ruler was tolerant of Christianity only out of expedient policy. Even Constantine himself was reticent about the religious implication of his victory, at least in the public monuments set up to celebrate it. He was shrewd enough not to alienate the pagan sentiment of the Roman Senate and people whose loyalty was necessary for the stability of his newly won power in the West.

The inscription placed beneath the colossal statue which he set up in the basilica built by Maxentius in the Forum⁴⁷ is indicative of a subtle ambiguity that finds expression also in his official rescripts and letters and on his coinage, as also in the decoration and dedicatory inscription of the Arch erected by the Senate and people to commemorate his victory. The references to the "salutary sign" or to the favor and "prompting" of the supreme "divinity" are unmistakable—indeed such religious sanction would have been expected of any imperial conqueror. But the stress is laid on liberation from tyranny and the restoration of peace.

We do not mean to suggest that the conversion of Constantine, in the experience recorded by Lactantius and later by Eusebius, was not genuine, or that it was motivated by political opportunism. Its authenticity is guaranteed not merely by what he said—for example, in the correspondence connected with the Donatist schism—but openly by what he did in disassociating himself from pagan worship. He refused to participate personally in pagan sacrifices of state, if not from the morrow of his victory over Maxentius, certainly from the time of the celebration of his decennalia in Rome in 315.⁴⁸ He refused to allow temples dedicated to him to offer sacrifices to him as a divinity.⁴⁹ And he arranged for and succeeded in bringing up his sons and heirs with a Christian education. The motives of his conversion—assuming that we really know them—may not be satisfying to a theologian. But they were not any less sincere simply because they were mixed with his political ambition and will to power. Unlike the conflict with Maxentius, the final power struggle, in his war with Licinius, was motivated by religious as well as by political aspirations.⁵⁰

The ultimate triumph of Constantine in the political arena, following the downfall of Licinius, was understood at once by the Church as the triumph of Christianity. This is clear in the encomium attributed to Lactantius and attached as an addendum in some manuscripts of his *Divine Institutes*.⁵¹ This

⁴⁷ Eusebius, *V. C.*, I. 40; C. Cecchelli, *Il trionfo della croce* (Rome, 1954).

⁴⁸ Eusebius, *V. C.*, I. 39, 48; cf. *H. E.*, IX. 9. See A. Alföldi, *The Conversion of Constantine and Pagan Rome*, trans. H. Mattingly (Oxford, 1948), p. 73.

⁴⁹ Eusebius, *V. C.*, IV. 16. Cf. Alföldi, *op. cit.*, pp. 89, 105–106.

⁵⁰ This is clear from the account of the conflict between Constantine and Licinius in Book II of the *V. C.* of Eusebius.

⁵¹ See the edition of S. Brandt in CSEL, 19, pt. 1 (Vienna, 1890), pp. xxxii, 1–LI, 668–669.

appendix cannot have been written before Constantine became sole Emperor. Some of its crucial phrases are:

The providence of the supreme Divinity has raised you to the principal dignity, that you may be able with true piety to rescind the evil decrees of others, to correct sins, to provide with paternal clemency for the salvation of men, indeed to remove wicked men from the State, whom, being cast down by the highest power, God has delivered into your hands, that it may be evident to all what is true majesty

The powerful right hand of God protects you from all dangers, bestows on you a quiet and tranquil reign, with the highest congratulation of all men. Not undeservedly has the Lord and Ruler of affairs chosen you for supreme power, to restore His holy religion, since you alone of all men could offer conspicuous example of virtue and holiness

It was therefore fitting that, in arranging the condition of the human race, the Divinity should use you as author and servant. To Him we supplicate in daily prayers that He may guard you especially, whom He has wished to be the guardian of the world, and inspire you with a will to persevere always in the love of the divine Name.

When we come to the end of Constantine's reign, we have the great *Oration* of Eusebius prepared for the tricennalia. The religio-political ideology of this panegyric has been admirably analysed by Professor Norman Baynes, who derives it from the Hellenistic philosophy of kingship, with its basis in "the conception of the imperial government as a terrestrial copy of the rule of God in Heaven: there is one God and one divine law, therefore there must be on earth but one ruler and a single law. That ruler, the Roman emperor, is the Vicegerent of the Christian God."⁵²

For our purposes here, the *Oration* of Eusebius outlines, in its concluding peroration, four aspects of the Constantinian triumph that are exhibited in the life and worship of the Church:

1. The erection throughout the world of churches and buildings to the honor of the supreme God and Lord, dedicated to Christ Himself, and expressive trophies of His victory.
2. The existence throughout the world of choirs of ascetics, devoted to the true philosophy, who exhibit lives of purity, self-denial, and pursuit of holy things.
3. The testimony of the Holy Scriptures, in fulfillment of prophecies of both the Old and the New Testaments, which confirm the truth of the oracles of God, and instruct the whole world in their doctrines.
4. The universal peace, concord, and harmony of all peoples and nations, exhibited in a common pursuit of divine wisdom, in united worship of the one true God, and in weekly assembly on the Lord's Day.⁵³

⁵² N. H. Baynes, "Eusebius and the Christian Empire," *Mélanges Bidez, Annuaire de l'Institut de philologie et d'histoire orientales*, 2 (1934), p. 13. (Reprinted in *Byzantine Studies and Other Essays* [London, 1955].)

⁵³ Eusebius, *Orat. de Const. laud.*, 17.

In principle none of these four aspects of Christianity originated in the age of Constantine. What Eusebius emphasizes is a new accent, and a new dimension and support, given by Constantine's intervention and beneficent promotion in the affairs of the Church.

IV

The most obvious, visible result of Constantine's Christian allegiance was the new architectural setting provided for the Church's worship. We are today as much impressed by it as was Eusebius himself.

From the testimony of Eusebius and others we know that during the long peace before the Diocletian persecution the Church began to move out of its arrangements in loaned houses and rented halls to buildings specifically constructed for its liturgical and other needs. The exact architectural nature of these structures eludes us. Some were reconstructed houses; others were doubtless newly designed edifices. Lactantius calls them *conventicula*, "meeting houses."⁵⁴ Eusebius never calls them "basilicas."⁵⁵

To date all our information confirms the hypothesis that Constantine's architects were the first to provide the Church with structures modelled on the basilica.⁵⁶ The plan of pagan temples — "religious architecture" in the strict sense—was not suitable to the needs of Christian worship; and the Church would not have been sympathetic to a form and style with obvious associations with pagan cult. The pagan temple was a *domus dei*, a house of the god or goddess, even as the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem, in its Holy of Holies, was a place of God's presence. But the Christian edifice was *domus ecclesiae*, a house of the Church. For, as Lactantius said, the true temple of God is in men, not in material walls.⁵⁷ Christian aversion to temples was comparable to the disdain for idols. The indwelling of God among men was manifested not in material things and places but in human minds and consciences. Christian faith removed the old distinction between the sacred and the secular in the created order. Any time, place, or circumstance was sanctified by thanksgiving and prayer to God and by loving obedience to His commands.⁵⁸

The adoption of the basilica was thus conformable to Christian principle. Its association with communal order and activity was agreeable to the Christian ideal of an earthly society patterned after the heavenly City. The fact that the word "basilica" implied royal or imperial foundation gave it appropriateness in the context of Constantine's conception of the terrestrial realm as a copy of divine rule and law.

The bishop's *cathedra* or chair in the apse of the basilica corresponded to the seat of the magistrate in the civic basilica. This association was under-

⁵⁴ *De mort. pers.*, 15, 34 (the edict of Galerius), 36, 48; *De div. inst.*, V. 11, 10. Occasionally he uses the word *ecclesia*: *De mort. pers.*, 12, 48. See the note of Moreau, *op. cit.*, 2, pp. 274, 290 (*supra*, note 45).

⁵⁵ G. Downey, "Constantine's Churches at Antioch, Tyre and Jerusalem (Notes on Architectural Terms)," *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph*, 38 (1962), pp. 191–196.

⁵⁶ See *supra*, note 2.

⁵⁷ *De mort. pers.*, 15.

⁵⁸ Cf. F. W. Young, "The Theological Context of New Testament Worship," *Worship in Scripture and Tradition*, ed. M. H. Shepherd, Jr. (New York, 1963), pp. 77–97.

scored by Constantine's extension to bishops of the right to hear civil cases at law.⁵⁹ Yet this was only a new accent. The episcopal *cathedra* derived from the ruler's seat ("Moses' seat") in the Jewish synagogue, a seat of presidency in worship, teaching, and judgment. It corresponded to God's throne in heaven, to Christ's throne as world-ruler and judge by God's dispensation.⁶⁰ The bishop was guardian of true doctrine and teaching. His chair also recalled the seat of the philosopher and the professor. In Constantine's basilican churches, all these strands of association were combined, and tied to the idea of the Emperor as vicegerent of the supreme God and Ruler of the universe.⁶¹

The "lofty throne" erected by Paul of Samosata in his cathedral at Antioch was thus not an innovation. Perhaps the unprecedented magnificence of it gave offense. Eusebius tells us that the old house-church cathedral of Sion in Jerusalem had preserved to his day the "throne of James," the Lord's brother and the first Bishop of Jerusalem.⁶² The well-known statue of Hippolytus in Rome exhibits the teacher-philosopher-theologian in his chair, and is inscribed with a catalogue of his published work.⁶³ A late third-century sarcophagus in Santa Maria Antiqua in Rome shows a seated philosopher in the central panel, flanked by an *Orans* and the Good Shepherd. Does this define the position and function of a bishop or presbyter in the Church? After Constantine, Christ Himself takes this seat as Giver of the Law and Truth and Peace to His apostles and disciples—as in the mosaics of Santa Costanza and Santa Pudenziana, and in the upper central panel sculptured on the sarcophagus of Junius Bassus.⁶⁴

Constantine's churches were of two types: 1) the city cathedral, a focus and symbol of the unity of the Christian community gathered about its bishop for the corporate, Sunday liturgy; and 2) the commemorative *martyria*, places of witness, where the community assembled on special occasions to celebrate the triumph of Christ and His saints over the powers of sin, evil, and death. The former type exhibited the on-going life of the pilgrim church in time, the latter type pointed to the supra-temporal reality of the age to come. In both places the liturgy was Eucharistic. It testified to faith in the transcendence of Christ's kingdom over all temporal societies, and their transfiguration and judgment both now and in the consummation of the world. The dual dimension of time and eternity was unified by an eschatological understanding of man's existence. The mean and ordinary character of Christian meeting-

⁵⁹ See *supra*, note 17.

⁶⁰ Matt. 23:2 ("Moses' seat"); for the concept of thrones of Christ and of His apostles, see Matt. 19:28, Luke 22:30, Heb. 8:1, Rev. 3:21, 20:4, etc.

⁶¹ Stommel, *op. cit.* (see *supra*, note 34). In the great Constantinian churches, of course, the altar is the "throne of Christ," not the bishop's chair, though there is a close correlation between the two. Note especially the description of the silver canopy over the altar of the Lateran basilica, in *Liber Pontificalis* (ed. Duchesne, 1, pp. 172, 191), with its detail of Christ among the apostles and the angels. Cf. H. P. L'Orange, *Art Forms and Civic Life in the Late Roman Empire* (Princeton, 1965), pp. 79–85.

⁶² *H. E.*, VII. 19.

⁶³ G. Bovini, *Sant'Ippolito dottore e martire del III secolo*, Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana (Vatican City, 1943), pp. 69–119; but cf. the *caveat* of A. Amore, "Note su S. Ippolito Martire," *Rivista di Archeologia Cristiana*, 30 (1954), pp. 84–85.

⁶⁴ See the good illustrations in Volbach, *op. cit.*, pls. 4, 33, 41–42, 45, 130. The same scene on the ivory casket of Brescia shows Christ standing: cf. pls. 85–86.

houses and cemetery chapels had reinforced this sense of the transitoriness of all things earthly, which would be caught up and transformed in the glory soon to be revealed.

The monumental impressiveness and splendor of Constantine's churches did not alter this basic ideology, but they added a stronger emphasis to the historical as over against the eschatological situation of the Church. The temporal dimension was no longer a merely transitory stage of existence, but a true image and copy of the eternal glory of the communion of saints. The Church was exhibited not merely as a "colony of heaven" (to quote St. Paul's perceptive phrase),⁶⁵ a company of strangers and sojourners. It was now revealed to be the visible reflection of an invisible dominion, which has received—to use Eusebius' phrase of the Emperor—"a transcript of the divine sovereignty, and directs, in imitation of God Himself, the administration of the world's affairs."⁶⁶

Constantine did not invent the idea of a cathedral church as a fixed locus of the bishop's presidency. The old Sion at Jerusalem, and the Palaea at Antioch (destroyed by Diocletian and rebuilt after 313)⁶⁷ had made the institution known in the East. Possibly the same was true at Nicomedia and Tyre. But there is no indication of such a cathedral church, before Constantine, at Alexandria, Rome, or other churches of the West. Where the Christian community was small enough to form but a single congregation, there would have been need for only one place of assembly. Larger urban centers with many congregations, such as Alexandria and Rome, seem not to have had a fixed place for the bishop's *cathedra*. He performed peripatetic liturgical stations—a custom that was itself symbol of a pilgrim church that has in this world no abiding place.⁶⁸

Many of Constantine's cathedrals were built in proximity to imperial palaces, where these existed. This was true in Milan, Trier, Constantinople, and Antioch, possibly also in Nicomedia.⁶⁹ At Alexandria, the palace known as *Caesarion* was destined to become "the great church," though its construction and dedication were delayed until after the middle of the century, because of the turbulent conditions of Church-State relations of Athanasius and his usurping rivals.⁷⁰ In Rome the Emperor gave the bishop, after his victory over Maxentius, the Lateran palace of his wife Fausta, for headquarters and residence.

⁶⁵ Phil. 3:20 (Moffatt trans.).

⁶⁶ *Orat. de Const. laud.*, I.

⁶⁷ Theodoret, *H. E.*, I. 2.

⁶⁸ Cf. H. Leclercq, "Stations liturgiques," *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie Chrétienne et de Liturgie*, 15 (1951), cols. 1653–1657; R. Hierzegger, "Collecta und Statio," *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie*, 60 (1936), pp. 511–554.

⁶⁹ For Milan: A. Calderini, *Storia di Milano*, 1 (Milan, 1953), pp. 591–625. For Trier: Th. Kempf, "Frühchristliche Funde und Forschungen in Deutschland," *Actes du Ve Congrès international d'archéologie chrétienne (Aix-en-Provence, 1954)*, *Studi di antichità cristiana*, 22 (Vatican City, 1957), pp. 61–72. For Constantinople: A. M. Schneider, "Die vorjustinianische Sophienkirche," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 36 (1936), pp. 77–85. For Antioch: W. Eltester, "Die Kirchen Antiochias im IV. Jahrhundert," *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 36 (1937), pp. 327–341. For Nicomedia: cf. Eusebius, *V. C.*, III. 50.

⁷⁰ Athanasius, *Apol. ad Constantium*, 14 ff. (written in 357).

Significantly, in deference to the pagan officialdom of the City, he did not establish a center for the Roman pontiff in the imperial center, close to the Forum and Palatine. The Lateran was on the periphery of the City, nearer to the urban area of the Subura, which had become more predominantly Christian in allegiance.⁷¹

The situation of Jerusalem was peculiar, as it was not a place of imperial residence, yet a locale especially honored for its witness to the triumph of Christ and the historical origin of the Faith. Here a new cathedral and *martyrion* (the Anastasis) were combined in a single architectural complex, in the center of the city, by a fortunate circumstance of invention of the holy place of Christ's victory.⁷²

All of Constantine's cathedrals were dedicated to Christ. The *martyria* were named for the event or saint commemorated. The ideology is consistent and clear, though often obscured by popular designations. Few would refer to the Roman cathedral by its dedication to Christ the Saviour, but as the Lateran or "Constantinian basilica," from the old custom of naming churches after the *titulus*—or later (as St. John's), from the patron saint of the cathedral baptistery. In Milan, the *basilica maior*, also named for the Saviour, became known as St. Thecla's. Antioch's cathedral was referred to as the Octagon, from its shape; Jerusalem's was called the *Martyrion* from its function.⁷³ The cathedral of Constantinople, however, has retained its original reference to Christ as the Holy Wisdom.

The edifices known as *martyria*, the trophies of victory, were designed as Christian counterparts of the *heroa* of pagan heroes and saints, and in their architecture show analogies to pagan honorific and funerary structures.⁷⁴ Constantine, again, did not invent this devotion. The cultus of the martyrs was well-established in the Church by his time. We can trace it to the mid-second century in Asia Minor, and a little later in North Africa.⁷⁵ At Rome it appears to have been officially organized in the episcopate of Pope Fabian, martyr of the Decian persecution. It was given "apostolic" prestige by the institution of the Feast of SS. Peter and Paul in 258, during the Valerian persecution, to commemorate the double witness of the apostles as martyr-founders of the Roman Church.⁷⁶ About the same time the memorial of the bishops at Rome, who were not martyrs, was observed on the anniversaries of their death. In addition, a special foundation-festival of the Chair of Peter was fixed on

⁷¹ R. Vielliard, *Recherches sur les origines de la Rome chrétienne*, reprinted with a preface by É. Mâle (Rome, 1959), p. 57 ff.

⁷² Eusebius, *V. C.*, III. 25–40. Cf. E. Wistrand, *Konstantins Kirche am heiligen Grab in Jerusalem nach den ältesten literarischen Zeugnissen*, Acta Universitatis Gotoburgensis (Göteborg, 1952).

⁷³ See *supra*, notes 67 and 72.

⁷⁴ A. Grabar, *Martyrium, Recherches sur le culte des reliques et l'art chrétien antique*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1946), I, p. 31 ff. Cf. Th. Klauser, *Vom Heroon zur Märtyrverbasilika*, Kriegsvorträge der Rheinischen Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn a. Rh., 62 (Bonn, 1942).

⁷⁵ H. Delehaye, *Les origines du culte des martyrs*, 2nd rev. ed., Subsidia hagiographica, 20 (Brussels, 1933).

⁷⁶ *Liber Pontificalis*, ed. Duchesne, I, pp. civ–cvii, 11; see the bibliography in the new edition of C. Vogel (Paris, 1957), 3, p. 25. Cf. E. Kirschbaum, *The Tombs of St. Peter and St. Paul*, trans. J. Murray (New York, 1959), pp. 142, 196–200.

February 22nd.⁷⁷ These *martyria* became centers of pilgrimage for a larger constituency than that of the local church. What the cathedral church was to the older house-church, the *martyria* were to the simple *cellae* of the cemeteries. The resultant effect was to emphasize the historical testimony over against the eschatological hope.

We have details of two types of *martyria* erected in the reign: 1) the monumental edifices built in Palestine at the sites of the history of salvation; and 2) the structures erected over the tombs of distinguished martyrs in the cemeteries of Rome. Eusebius says that similar *martyria* were provided in Constantinople, and doubtless the same was true elsewhere.⁷⁸ Not all of them were due to Constantine's personal intervention. Some were promoted by his mother Helena and his sister Constantia. The imperial family doubtless gave examples for other affluent Christians to follow.

Of particular interest is the Emperor's concern, from the time of his victory over Maxentius, to attach these *martyria* to burial arrangements for the imperial house—first in Rome, later in Constantinople. Many rulers who consider themselves men of destiny plan their burial places long before they expect to depart from this world.⁷⁹ Constantine was no exception. What is peculiarly interesting is the development in his own conceptions of his role with respect to the Church, between his earthly pilgrimage from his capital at Rome to his capital at Constantinople.

Constantine's gift of the Lateran palace to the Roman bishop was made shortly after the victory at Ponte Milvio, October 28, 312; for Pope Miltiades was in possession of it a year later, when he presided over the first investigation of the Donatist schism.⁸⁰ The exact date of the building of the Pope's cathedral is unknown. Excavations under the present nave reveal that it was erected over the caserne of the imperial body-guard organized by Septimius Severus, the *castra equitum singularium*. They had fought with Maxentius against Constantine, hence it may be that the gift of their property was an act of retaliation.⁸¹

The Emperor also took over the guard's cemetery on the Via Labicana, *ad duas lauros*, where he erected a great mausoleum for himself and his family. Today known as the Tor Pignattara, this imperial tomb became the resting place of Constantine's mother, whose magnificent porphyry sarcophagus is now preserved in the Vatican. The sarcophagus was certainly not designed originally

⁷⁷ This feast, as the one in the preceding note, also appears in the Calendar of 354; debate as to its origin revolves around the relation of it to the pagan observance of *cara cognata*. P. Batiffol, "Natale Petri de cathedra," *The Journal of Theological Studies*, 26 (1925), pp. 399–404; J. P. Kirsch, "Die beiden Apostelfeste Petri Stuhlfieier und Pauli Bekehrung im Januar," *Jahrbuch für Liturgiewissenschaft*, 5 (1925), pp. 48–67; Th. Klauser, "Der Ursprung des Festes Petri Stuhlfieier am 22 Februar," *Ephemerides Liturgicae*, 41 (1927), pp. 40–57, 127–136; H. Lietzmann, *Petrus und Paulus in Rom*, *Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte*, 1, 2d rev. ed. (Berlin-Leipzig, 1927), pp. 3–21.

⁷⁸ V. C., III. 48.

⁷⁹ A notable contemporary example is the development of the memorial shrine by General Franco at Valle de los Caidos, near Madrid.

⁸⁰ See *supra*, note 44.

⁸¹ E. Josi, "Scoperte nella basilica costantiniana al Laterano," *Rivista di Archeologia Cristiana*, 11 (1934), pp. 335–338; "La visita agli scavi di S. Giovanni in Laterano," *Atti del IV Congresso internazionale di archeologia cristiana* (Vatican City, 1938), 1, *Studi di antichità cristiana*, 16 (Rome, 1940), pp. 49–57.

for her tomb, with its sculptured scenes of military victories over bearded barbarians. It has been conjectured that Constantine planned the sarcophagus for his father, if not for himself.⁸²

The cemetery *ad duas lauros* was contiguous to a Christian catacomb where some of the distinguished martyrs of the Diocletian persecution were buried, from two of whom it has its name of the Catacomb of SS. Marcellinus and Peter. Over their subterranean graves Constantine erected a large cemeterial basilica (*martyrion*), and conjoined it by an intervening narthex to the imperial mausoleum. This complex must have been prepared while he was still Emperor of the West and before the break with Licinius.⁸³

After the capital was moved to Constantinople, Constantine developed more grandiose ideas about his funerary monument. He was no longer content to build his tomb in a Christian cemetery near the shrine of martyrs—outside the city walls, as was the old Roman custom. He would emulate the deified Alexander and Augustus, whose burial monuments were erected inside their capitals.⁸⁴ Thus in his last years, Constantine made plans for the Church of the Holy Apostles, inside the walls of his new capital, where he prepared twelve sarcophagi for the relics of the twelve apostles. In their midst, as Eusebius says, “his body would share their title” and “become the subject, with them, of the devotions which should be performed to their honor in this place.”⁸⁵ One sees here a change from Constantine’s conception of himself as “Bishop of those (or of the things) outside” to a rank “equal to the apostles.”⁸⁶ The mission of Christianity was now manifest—historically as well as eschatologically founded. In Eusebius’ reflection, the Emperor “continued to possess imperial power even after death, controlling, as though with renovated life, a universal dominion, and retaining in his own name, as Victor, Maximus, Augustus, the sovereignty of the Roman world.”⁸⁷ The Empire was now, no less than the Church, built on the foundation of the apostles.

V

The sanctification of the temporal order, through the Christian renovation of the Empire, is the key to the liturgical innovations of Constantine. It has two other accents.

It will be recalled that Eusebius, in his *Oration* for the tricennalia, noted the

⁸² P. Franchi de’ Cavalieri, *Constantiniana*, Studi e testi, 171 (Vatican City, 1953), pp. 174–176. See Volbach, *op. cit.*, pls. 22–23.

⁸³ According to the *Liber Pontificalis*, the endowments, like those of the Lateran, were all located in Italy and the adjacent islands. A similar complex of basilica-*martyrion*, combined with an imperial mausoleum, was erected at Sant’ Agnese on the Via Nomentana, either by Constantine’s sister or by his daughter. See F. W. Deichmann, *Friühchristliche Kirchen in Rom* (Basel, 1948), pp. 24–25; Krautheimer, *op. cit.*, pp. 41–44.

⁸⁴ Grabar, *op. cit.*, I, 227–34.

⁸⁵ V. C., IV. 60. On this church, see the recent study of R. Krautheimer, “Zu Konstantins Apostelkirche in Konstantinopel,” *Mullus, Festschrift Theodor Klauser = Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*, Ergänzungsband 1 (Münster i. W., 1964), pp. 224–229.

⁸⁶ On the much disputed phrase in Eusebius, V. C., IV. 24, see S. Calderone, *Costantino e il Cattolicesimo*, I (Florence, 1962), pp. xi–xlv.

⁸⁷ V. C., IV. 71.

existence of ascetic companies devoted to the study of true philosophy and the pursuit of holy things as a major mark of the Constantinian triumph. The monastic movement was well under way before the time of Constantine, both in its eremitic and its cenobitic forms. Its primary concern was the cultivation of an intense prayer and daily meditation upon the Scriptures. Daily times of prayer (later known as the Canonical Hours) had long been recommended to all faithful Christians. At the beginning of the third century, Hippolytus had given them an ingenious link to a sequence of commemoration of the saving events of the Lord's death and resurrection. Other associations of these hours had been suggested by the Alexandrian and North African Fathers—Clement, Origen, Tertullian and Cyprian. But the hours remained private and voluntary in character, although in some churches there had developed weekday morning sessions for prayer and Bible study at the place of assembly.⁸⁸

Constantine made a daily office of prayer official in his palace. Eusebius says that "he modelled his very palace into a church of God" by daily study of the Scriptures and regular prayers with all the members of his imperial court. He was especially insistent upon these devotions on Sundays and church festivals, and he recommended them to his court, his soldiers, and his subjects. To this end, among others, he made Sunday a legal holiday.⁸⁹

Eusebius does not say that Constantine drew his inspiration from monasticism. He gives the impression that the Emperor christianized a custom of his father's court.⁹⁰ Whatever the source of these daily devotions, they were for Constantine a necessary substitute for sacramental worship, which was denied him by reason of the delay of his baptism.

Later in the fourth century we have notices of the establishment in cathedral and larger churches of daily morning and evening psalmody and prayers, in addition to the sacramental Eucharistic worship of Sundays and feasts.⁹¹ Conducted by the bishop and his clergy, these services gradually attracted the participation of monastic communities and the more earnest Christian public. Most students of the history of the Daily Offices have assumed that these observances were a natural evolution from older practices of private prayer, or developed from vigil services held in conjunction with festivals of martyrs.⁹² There is no evidence that monks initiated them. We would suggest that a primary factor in their development may have come from the model of daily devotions in the imperial court.

Another liturgical accent of the Constantinian era was the new focus of celebration of the Incarnation festivals of Christmas and Epiphany, comparable to the Easter festival. There is as yet no consensus among scholars regarding the origin and relationships of these winter-solstice feasts in the Church, since there is no evidence of their general observance until the second half of the

⁸⁸ Shepherd, *The Paschal Liturgy and the Apocalypse* (see *supra*, note 1), pp. 68–74; J. H. Miller, *Fundamentals of the Liturgy* (Notre Dame, 1959), p. 298ff.

⁸⁹ V. C., IV. 17; for Sunday, *Cod. Theod.*, II. 8. 1, Eusebius, V. C., IV. 18–20.

⁹⁰ V. C., I. 17.

⁹¹ *Apost. Const.*, VIII. 34–39; Socrates, *H. E.*, V. 22; cf. Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 309 ff.

⁹² C. Marcora, *La vigilia nella liturgia*, Archivio Ambrosiano, 6 (Milan, 1954); J. A. Jungmann, *Pastoral Liturgy* (New York, 1962), pp. 105–122.

fourth century.⁹³ It has often been conjectured that Constantine himself had a hand in their promotion, if not in their invention. But this cannot be demonstrated. Certainly if he had been instrumental in their origin, it is strange that Eusebius should have made no mention of them.

The principal facts seem to be as follows: We know that Gnostic Christians in Egypt, in the time of Clement of Alexandria, were observing January 6th (Epiphany) as a festival of the manifestation of the Redeemer Christ in the world. The date selected is based upon an ancient mystery-cult festival in Egypt that celebrates the birthday of Aion from the Virgin Kore.⁹⁴ But from the time of this singular notice we have no further information until the middle of the fourth century, when the Epiphany feast appears to be widely celebrated by orthodox Christians both in the Eastern provinces and in the Western churches such as those of Rome and Milan.⁹⁵

On the other hand, the Nativity (or Christmas) festival on December 25th appears to have been of western origin, and linked to the official date of the winter solstice in the third and fourth centuries—a date also observed as the festival of the Birthday of the Unconquered Sun by devotees of the popular, and at times official, cult of the Sun.⁹⁶ Christian chronographers of the third century had already posited the theory that Christ was born on December 25th, from their symbolic calculations. Since the world must have been created at the spring solstice (March 25th), so the new creation of the world by the Incarnation of the Son of God must have begun on the same date. Hence the conception of Christ (Annunciation) occurred on March 25th and the birth on December 25th, exactly nine months later. But these chronological speculations do not indicate a liturgical festival in the churches.⁹⁷

The first clear indication of the feast occurs in the Roman Church's Calendar of 354. Internal criticism of this document suggests a recension that goes back to the year 336, which definitely places it within the reign of Constantine.⁹⁸ St. Augustine tells us that the Donatists observed Christmas but not the

⁹³ B. Botte, *Les origines de la Noël et de l'Epiphanie, Etude historique, Textes et études liturgiques*, 1 (Louvain, 1932). The literature is vast. For discussion of recent studies, L. Fendt, "Der heutige Stand der Forschung über das Geburtstag Jesu am 25. XII. und über Epiphanias," *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, 78 (1953), pp. 1–10.

⁹⁴ Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*, I. 21. K. Holl, "Der Ursprung des Epiphanienfestes," *Sitzungsberichte der preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* (1917), pp. 402–438 (reprinted in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte*, 2 [Tübingen, 1928], pp. 123–154); F. Boll, "Zu Holls Abhandlung über den Ursprung des Epiphanienfestes," *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, 19 (1917–1919), pp. 190–191; R. Pettazzoni, "Aion—(Kronos) Chronos in Egypt," *Studies in the History of Religions* (Supplements to *Numen*), 1 (Leiden, 1954), pp. 171–179.

⁹⁵ For the East, the evidence is clear from sermons of Gregory Nazianzus and John Chrysostom, and the *Apostolic Constitutions*, VIII. 33. The evidence for the West revolves around the disputed passage in Ambrose, *De virg.*, III. 1. For older literature, see E. Caspar, "Kleine Beiträge zur älteren Papstgeschichte. 3. Die Marcellina-Predigt des Liberius und das römische Weihnachtsfest," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, 46 (1927), pp. 346–355; Lietzmann, *Petrus und Paulus in Rom*, pp. 103–109; H. Frank, "Frühgeschichte und Ursprung des römischen Weihnachtsfestes im Lichte neuerer Forschung," *Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft*, 2 (1952), pp. 1–24.

⁹⁶ Botte, *op. cit. (supra, note 93)*, pp. 62–63; F. Altheim, *Der unbesiegte Gott, Heidentum und Christentum*, Rowohlt's deutsche Enzyklopädie, 35 (Hamburg, 1957).

⁹⁷ L. Duchesne, *Origines du culte chrétien. Etude sur la liturgie latine avant Charlemagne*, 5th ed. (Paris, 1925), pp. 271–272; H. Engberding, "Der 25. Dezember als Tag der Feier der Geburt des Herrn," *Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft*, 2 (1952), pp. 25–43; but contra, Botte, *op. cit.*, pp. 60–61, 88–105.

⁹⁸ See *supra*, note 1.

Epiphany.⁹⁹ On the basis of this notice, some have thought that the celebration of Christmas must antedate the reign of Constantine, since it is unlikely that the Donatists would have adopted a feast of the catholic Church that was instituted after the beginning of the schism.¹⁰⁰ It is possible, however, that the Christmas festival infiltrated among the Donatists during the period of forced union with the catholics, under Constantius II, from 347 to 361.¹⁰¹

Later Church Fathers of the fourth century certainly saw in the Incarnation festival a Christian rival to the pagan celebration of the Birthday of the Unconquered Sun. And the oldest liturgical formularies for the Christian observance suggest the same connection.¹⁰² Those who stress the syncretistic character of Constantine's religious convictions tend to attribute to him major responsibility for the popularity, if not the origination, of these festivals, and to link them ideologically with his special interest in the observance of Sunday.¹⁰³ On the other hand, those who consider the Incarnation festival as an evolutionary development of the Christian liturgy, even if it was consciously inaugurated as a rival to pagan observances, give more weight to the impact of theological and dogmatic controversy concerning the Person of Christ as the primary key to the spread and acceptance of these feasts in the fourth century.¹⁰⁴

There is no question that Constantine's deepest grasp of Christianity was in terms of *theophania* rather than of *parousia*. All the liturgical accents and emphases that come into the Church through his influence, whether directly or indirectly, tend in this direction. His interest is best stated in his letter to the bishops in Palestine for the erection of the church in Mambre.¹⁰⁵ The significance of this place was, for Constantine, one of theophany. He expressed himself in a kind of litany:

There the Supreme God first appeared to Abraham, and conversed with him, in that place.

There it was that the observance of the divine Law first began.

There first the Saviour Himself, with the two angels, vouchsafed to Abraham a manifestation of His presence.

There God first appeared to men.

There He gave promise to Abraham concerning his future seed, and straightway fulfilled that promise.

There He foretold that he should be the father of a multitude of nations. Is Constantine really thinking of Abraham, or is he thinking of himself? Is he reflecting the theophany granted to himself on the eve of the Ponte Milvio?

⁹⁹ *Serm.*, 202. 2. T. C. Lawlor, *St. Augustine, Sermons for Christmas and Epiphany*, Ancient Christian Writers, 15 (Westminster, Md., 1952), pp. 10-11; J. Leclercq, "Aux origines du cycle de Noël," *Ephemerides liturgicae*, 60 (1946), pp. 7-26.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Frank, *op. cit.*

¹⁰¹ For this period, see W. H. C. Frend, *The Donatist Church, A Movement of Protest in Roman North Africa* (Oxford, 1952), pp. 177-187.

¹⁰² F. J. Dölger, "Natalis Solis Invicti und das christliche Weihnachtsfest. Der Sonnengeburtstag und der Geburtstag Christi am 25. Dezember nach Weihnachtspredigten des vierten und fünften Jahrhunderts," *Antike und Christentum*, 6 (1950), pp. 23-30.

¹⁰³ Cf. Botte, *op. cit.*, p. 61ff.

¹⁰⁴ O. Cullmann, *Weihnachten in der alten Kirche* (Basel, 1947); English trans. in *The Early Church, Studies in Early Christian History and Theology*, ed. A. J. B. Higgins (Philadelphia, 1956), pp. 17-36.

¹⁰⁵ Eusebius, *V. C.*, III. 53.